

Former Secretary Richardson Visits



The site currently occupied by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Grand Junction Office was formally offered to the Riverview Technology Corporation at a ceremony December 4, 2000, at the DOE site. The transfer will be completed following approval of the Request for Deferred Remediation by the Governor of the State of Colorado. Participating in the Offer to Purchase ceremony (seated at table, left to right) were Donna Bergman-Tabbert, Manager, DOE Grand Junction Office; Knute Knudson, Chair of the Riverview Technology Corporation; and Bill Richardson, former Secretary of Energy; (back row, left to right) Gene Kinsey, Mayor of the City of Grand Junction; Dr. Carolyn Huntoon, DOE Assistant Secretary for Environmental Management; and Doralyn Genova, Mesa County Commissioner.

On December 4, 2000, the U.S. Department of Energy Grand Junction Office (DOE-GJO) hosted a visit by former Secretary of Energy Bill Richardson and Assistant Secretary for Environmental Management Dr. Carolyn Huntoon. This was the first time in recent history that a Secretary of Energy has visited the GJO.

The event included a ceremonial land transfer, marking the plan to transfer the GJO site out of federal ownership as part of the Department's goal to reduce overhead costs across the Energy Department complex. On December 4, Richardson and Knute Knudson, Chair of the community-based nonprofit Riverview Technology Corporation, signed a Memorandum of Understanding to transfer ownership of the site from DOE to the Grand Junction community. Richardson presented an oversized "key to the site" to Knudson at the ceremony.

The Riverview Technology Corporation will acquire all 56 acres of land and buildings at the site, with the exception of 8 acres and one building that will be purchased by the U.S. Army Reserve in 2001. "Our signing today is ceremonial," said Richardson. "But it represents change for the better." Before

the deed can be transferred in early spring 2001, Colorado Governor Bill Owens must sign a Request for Deferred Remediation, which is required when contamination is left on a federal site that is being transferred to a nonfederal entity. The transfer of the GJO site will make it the tenth DOE site in the country to be transferred for new uses—either back to the community or set aside for environmental preservation. Included in the negotiations was the agreement that DOE would lease back space from the Riverview Technology Corporation so that it could continue its functions uninterrupted.

Speaking before a crowd of approximately 180, Richardson summarized the history of the GJO site, from its purchase in 1943 by the U.S. Army for the purpose of acquiring uranium for the Manhattan Project to its current use by DOE for its environmental management mission. He also talked about the positive impact he hoped the transfer of the site would have on the Grand Junction community. "The Department will save an average of \$1.3 million annually in landlord costs, and the Riverview Technology Corporation will have the land and office space it needs to further local economic development in Mesa County," said Richardson. The site will provide office and light industrial space for community reuse.



GJO for Signing Ceremony

Richardson assured the audience that the critical missions the GJO performs will continue and that DOE will have a strong presence at the Grand Junction site for years to come. "You're doing a good job and the important work you're doing will be recognized," he said. One of those critical missions is the recent assignment to GJO of the uranium mill tailings cleanup work at the Moab Site in Utah, one of Richardson's initiatives and directed by recent federal legislation. He said, "This cleanup will ensure the safety of drinking water not only in Utah but also in other Western States."

Donna Bergman-Tabbert, DOE-GJO Manager, emceed the signing event, and numerous dignitaries made remarks at the ceremony, including Dr. Carolyn Huntoon; Knudson; local representatives of Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell, Senator Wayne Allard, and Congressman Scott McInnis offices; a Mesa County Commissioner; the Mayor of Grand Junction; and a representative for the Governor of Colorado.

Dr. Carolyn Huntoon commended GJO for its accomplishments, including the reduction of mortgage costs that will result from the site transfer. She also spoke about GJO's key role in getting rid of the nuclear waste legacy, saying, "The Grand Junction Office knows how to do the technical work." She said DOE would continue to rely on GJO as the "world's expert" in groundwater monitoring.

Knudson called the agreement a true "win-win" for everyone: DOE, the American taxpayers, the City of Grand Junction, and Mesa County. The 11-member Riverview Technology Corporation was originally formed as a commission to ensure retention of the capabilities of the DOE-GJO workforce that has supported the local economy for more than 50 years. GJO site employees were invited to attend the ceremony and reception that followed.❖

Former Secretary of Energy Bill Richardson and Dr. Carolyn Huntoon, Assistant Secretary for Environmental Management, emphasized the positive effects of transferring the DOE Grand Junction Office site (below) to the Riverview Technology Corporation.

